

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 DOTE-00 L-03 DEAE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-10 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00

USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01 /055 W

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P 072221Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9555

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 6268

IA O 11652 GDS

TAGS SNAR CO

SUBJ: NARCOTICS: GOC CONCERN OVER US CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT POLICY

REF BOGOTA 6103 AND 5889

1. FORN OFFICE UNDERSECY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS ROBERTO SOTO CALLED JULY 7 TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER STATEMENTS IN US CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT POLICY ON NARCOTICS (RETELS) TO EFFECT THAT US UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES MIGHT CONFISCATE SHIPS OF COLOMBIA'S FLOTA MERCANTE GRANCOLOMBIANA. SOTO SAID THAT FLOTA AND GOC WERE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO COOPERATE WITH US IN SUPPRESSION OF NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. NEITHER THE SHIPS AS SUCH NOR THE COMPANY WERE ENGAGED IN VIOLATION OF THE NARCOTICS LAWS. THESE VIOLATIONS WERE COMMITTED BY PERSONS BOTH COLOMBIAN AND AMERICAN AND IT WOULD THEREFORE BE INEQUITABLE TO IMPOSE PENALTIES ON THE VESSEL. IT WOULD ALSO BE UNREALISTIC TO THINK THE FLOTA COULD ELIMINATE ALL NARCOTICS SMUGGLING IN ITS SHIPS NO MATTER HOW SEVERE THE CONTROLS THAT MIGHT BE IMPOSED. GIVEN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WOULD BE NO MORE REASONABLE TO CONFISCATE A FLOTA SHIP THAN A BRANIFF AIRCRAFT. SOTO CONCLUDED BY STATING THAT HE WAS VERY DISTURBED OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF CONFISCATION BECAUSE THE FORN OFFICE WOULD CONSIDER SUCH ACTION NEITHER REASONABLE NOR EQUITABLE. HE HOPED USG WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE SUCH PENALTY WOULD NOT BE IMPOSED ON FLOTA SHIPS.

2. AMB VAKY MAY WISH TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION DURING HIS CONSUL-
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TATION IN DEPT. WHITE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, POLICIES, CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BOGOTA06268
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750235-0697
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750779/aaaacsda.tel
Line Count: 61
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BOGOTA 6103, 75 BOGOTA 5889
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NARCOTICS: GOC CONCERN OVER US CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT POLICY
TAGS: SNAR, CO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006